

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## Summary of Lake Berryessa Community Forum Meeting

**Date:** May 14, 2014

**Time:** 1:00 pm

**Location:** Berryessa Senior Center

**Status of Recreation Services:** All Reclamation managed day use areas are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Dufer Point Visitor Center is open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekends and from noon to 3:00 p.m. on weekdays, closed on Wednesdays. Markley Cove and Pleasure Cove are fully opened and operating with a variety of marina services, retail, day use, boat launch and cabins, with camping also available at Pleasure Cove. Steele Canyon is open for camping, day use, and boat launching. Spanish Flat is open for camping and day use. Putah Canyon is open for camping, day use, and boat launching. Improvements have been implemented at Steele Canyon, Spanish Flat and Putah Canyon recently, including new tables, fire rings and grills. New concrete vault toilets have been installed, including two each at Steele Canyon, Spanish Flat and Putah Canyon. New courtesy launching docks have been installed at Putah Canyon and Steele Canyon.

Reclamation is currently in the process of implementing several contracts for improvements in concession areas. A variety of projects combined into a concession improvement contract will commence in Steele Canyon, Spanish Flat, and Putah Canyon. Basic water distribution systems along with RV dump stations will be built for Steele Canyon, Spanish Flat, and Putah Canyon. The road slide will be repaired in Spanish Flat. The first priority will be water distribution in order to hook into existing water systems and work is scheduled to start in Steele Canyon. All environmental and cultural review for the implementation of the Concession Improvement Contract has been completed. The specific date that water would be made available in Steele Canyon and Spanish Flat will be determined depending on the cost estimates and review of plans proposed by the contractor. A contract to drill and develop a potable water well in Putah Canyon is currently in solicitation. The well location was selected in areas that were at least one half mile from the former underground fuel storage tank leak. The location of the well was determined through a dowser and the estimated production is 27 gallons per minute. The Putah Canyon well will have a storage tank and a basic water distribution system. If future operators require additional water capacity they will have to drill additional wells or install a water treatment system to process lake water.

Members of the Coordinating team brought up issues about the new tables in the concession area and the replacement of former concrete tables. Reclamation was compelled to have a plan in place should a previous concessionaire have exercised their rights to remove their property, such as fire rings and picnic tables, and consequently new tables, grills and fire rings were purchased for installation. As well the condition of the concrete tables was such that many were damaged or in the process of decay and damaged easily when moved. Members of the Coordinating team brought up issues about improvements to trails in the concession areas, and invasive species treatments in concession areas. Reclamation noted that the concession areas are currently operating under interim contracts, to provide limited services and that full development of recreational facilities would be part of full development under a long-term contractor. Trails in the concession areas would be the responsibility of the long-

term concession contractor. But for interim concession contractors trail development is a substantial investment of limited resources. Interim concessionaires will normally expend resources on activities and areas that offer a direct return on investment. Potential volunteers could approach the interim concession contractors with proposals to conduct some number of hours of trail improvements in exchange for a volunteer pass. In regard to trails outside of the concession areas, Reclamation currently has limited staff and equipment resources and is committing those to ensuring basic operations and planning for the long-term operations. Reclamation is receptive to potential partners conducting work on trails. Regarding invasive plants, the interim concession contractors are responsible for landscaping in the areas that they manage, and long-term concession contractors would have specific provisions in their contracts about the treatment and removal of invasive or toxic plants.

**Preparation for Summer Operations:** Local Reclamation staff recently coordinated a meeting between the concession contractors and local public health and safety representatives in order to ensure that every concession contractor is aware of the roles of different agencies in case of emergencies. After hours contact numbers will be posted at all concession areas. All concession areas have reported that their reservations are full for Memorial Day, as well all concession areas have hired staff and are preparing sites for summer. Pleasure Cove has recently installed a new water storage tank as well as a 175 feet long x 12 feet long dock, and will be installing another dock soon. Linda Frazier from Markley Cove detailed recent improvements at Markley Cove. A new fuel dock with credit card payment at the pump is being built and will be installed in the near future. Markley Cove is also updating the houseboat pumpout system and water treatment plant, and implementing an online reservation system for cabin rentals. Markley Cove will be open at 6:00 a.m. every morning during the summer and will close at 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and 8:00 p.m. on weekends. For Memorial Day, Markley Cove has reserved all of its cabins and is expecting heavy use of the boat launch and boat rental services. Currently all of the small boat slips at Markley Cove are reserved and there is a waiting list. Markley Cove is partnering with the Winters Chamber of Commerce for the upcoming Kokanee Inland Fisheries fishing tournament, and is partnering with Reclamation for the World Environment Day. Reclamation has worked to get its day use facilities in shape for the upcoming summer, including landscaping and repairs. Shade shelters in Oak Shores Day Use Area are now rentable on-line through Recreation.gov.

**Law Enforcement and Fire Management Activities:** Sergeant Chris Carlisle gave a status of the Napa County Sheriff's Office (NCSO) boat patrol, including an overview of types of calls and resources that NCSO has in area. Sergeant Carlisle described the patrols on water and on land that the sheriff's deputies conduct, including patrols through local communities and efforts to reduce unauthorized rentals. Based on the data he has collected, he will be focusing the NCSO staff on the busiest days of the week and times of day.

Battalion Chief Geoff Belyea of CALFIRE gave a status of local fire and emergency medical resources, including the staffing of the Spanish Flat station and the local volunteer stations at Capell Valley and Pope Valley. He identified that summer staffing, including an additional engine at Spanish Flat, will begin on May 19. Defensible space inspections are currently underway to confirm 100 feet of defensible space around each residence. Reclamation and the Berryessa Highlands Fire Safe Council have partnered to establish a Steele Canyon-Berryessa Highlands firebreak to slow the spread of potential fires. Napa County is working on the development of new fire stations at Berryessa Estates and Berryessa Highlands and is vetting possible architects. The firebreak at Berryessa Pines will soon be re-established. Belyea identified that the Lake Berryessa area is serviced by two ambulance systems. In the southern portion of the lake AMR ambulance in Napa is the primary ambulance provider. For the northern portions of the lake region, a Quick Response Vehicle out of St. Helena and

Angwin Ambulance will respond. An Air Ambulance is available for serious evacuations to hospitals. Several emergency response helicopters in the area can provide emergency service to the lake, including hoist rescues. All staff at the Spanish Flat station are trained to the EMT level.

**Update on Eastside Management Planning:** Reclamation will be asking the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to mutually terminate the Memorandum of Understanding to manage the Lake Berryessa Wildlife Area as Fish and Wildlife has limited resources to commit to the Lake Berryessa Wildlife Area. Reclamation is in the process of identifying a new managing partner for the Lake Berryessa Wildlife Area, and has received letters of interest from Tuleyome and the Blue Ridge Berryessa Partnership. Reclamation will soon make a determination of which organization will become the managing partner. In order to proceed with additional management planning, Reclamation will need to accomplish all appropriate environmental and cultural surveys for any future uses and is locating funding for those surveys. Staff from Reclamation's Mid-Pacific Region have completed cultural resources inventory of paddocks one, two, three, and four of the seven in the Wildlife Area, which includes all of the area burned during the October 2013 wildfire. This inventory survey will be used to create an archeological report that will be sent to the State Historical Preservation Office for review and concurrence. Thereafter, Reclamation will have to create site-specific environmental documentation in order to implement any management plans.

The third consecutive controlled burn of paddock one is scheduled to occur in June. In paddock one the plan has been at least three years of consecutive burns in order to reduce invasive species. Members of the Coordinating Team brought up issues of invasives reoccupying the burn areas, protection of oak seedlings in the burn areas, condition of the road on the east side, and a concern that a plan is necessary for at least paddock one as three consecutive burn years will have occurred by June.

**Update on Long-Term Concession Area Development:** Reclamation is conducting site planning for five recreation areas to be managed by concession contractors. At a January public meeting in Napa, Reclamation shared the first version of concept maps for the concession areas. Those maps have been updated based on public and Reclamation feedback. A draft Financial Feasibility Evaluation has been created and the findings in that report will further alter the details of the site plans and infrastructure plans. Reclamation will present the progress on site plans at the June forum meeting. Proceeding into the fall, Reclamation will be conducting the formal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, and the plans will be fine-tuned and formal comments will be solicited. Then Reclamation will make a final decision on plans for the concession areas and offer them as a business opportunity in a prospectus. Reclamation showed coordinating team members the progress on the site plans in April. Reclamation's design contractor's next task is the development of infrastructure design based on the conceptual site plans.

**Future meetings/Potential Topics:** Suggestions or recommendations for topics for future forum meetings should be addressed to Park Manager Jeff Laird.

**Public Comment:** Public comments were received regarding further information on the process of determining a management partner and future management plans for the Lake Berryessa Wildlife Area. Other comments regarding the Wildlife Area included mention that the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)/UC Davis plan should be considered and that the NRCS should be used for technical assistance.

Public comments were received regarding the timetable for water hookup for Steele Canyon. Reclamation indicated that the contractor to build the limited water distribution would be starting in

June, and that the contractor has been asked to begin work in Steele Canyon. Reclamation has agreed that during the interim contract period at Steele Canyon, the water used would be charged at 150% of normal water use fee. The limited water distribution system would provide a common spigot for users of Steele Canyon. Reclamation has stated that any long-term concession contractor would be obligated to pay the hookup fee for the proper number of Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs) it would use.

Public comments were made regarding the hours of operation of Steele Park and Spanish Flat. Comments indicated that since the gates are closed, it appears that campers are unwelcome. Reclamation indicated that the gates had minimum hours of operation in the interim contracts and that both concession areas were being operated in accordance with their contract. . Reclamation urged people with interest in using the concession areas outside of the standard hours to contact the concession contractor.

Comments were received regarding the timing of long-term development of concession areas. Reclamation indicated that the timeline is available for public view on the website and that the award of a contract and commencement of a contractor(s) on site would be in May of 2016. As well, Reclamation indicated that the future contracts would have specific construction goals to achieve in the first two years.

Comments were received about the possibility of fire hazard reduction in the Berryessa Pines area. Geoff Belyea, Battalion Chief, indicated that burning may not be the best solution in areas close to lodgings, and that the presence of a Fire Safe Council in the Berryessa Pines to assist in planning and funding fire prevention activities could accomplish a lot to make that community safe.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 18, 2014, from 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. at the Community Center in Winters.

For questions or comments regarding Lake Berryessa, contact Park Manager Jeff Laird, either by e-mail (JLaird@usbr.gov), mail (Lake Berryessa Office, Park Manager, 5520 Knoxville RD., Napa CA 94558) or by phone (707-966-2111, ext 0).

**For additional information, please visit the Lake Berryessa website at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/berryessa> and click on “Recreation Updates” in the light-blue navigation column on the left.**